

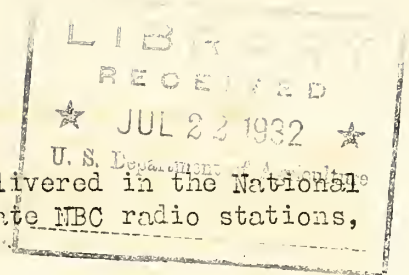
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MAY WEATHER AND CROPS.

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, June 8, 1932.



While the latter part of May was abnormally cool over most of the eastern half of the country, the month, as a whole, had very nearly normal warmth, and, when the whole country is considered, it was remarkable for the uniformity in temperature. In fact, the entire spring season, March to May, this year, was characterized by temperatures much nearer normal than usual. In general, the average for the three months was within 1° of normal over probably 90 per cent of the country, a very unusual occurrence. The lowest temperature reported in May for a first-order station was 26° at Yellowstone Park, Wyo. The lowest ever recorded in this month at a first-order station was 6° above zero at Devils Lake, N. Dak., on May 2, 1907.

Rainfall during May was decidedly spotted, with much the greater portion of the country receiving less than normal. In most of the middle Atlantic area, the western Lake region, and more generally in the Northwest and Southwest, the monthly totals were above normal, while a few upper Mississippi Valley and East Gulf sections had more than the usual amounts for May. In other areas, east of the Rocky Mountains, there was less than normal, with large deficiencies in the western Ohio, central Mississippi, and extreme lower Missouri Valleys, and also in the west-central Great Plains. An outstanding favorable feature of May rainfall, and even for several months past, was the generous amount received in the Northwestern States which have suffered severely from drought during the last few years. For the three spring months of last year, the Dakotas and Montana had only about half the normal rainfall, while this year they had considerably more than normal, except in a few localities. These States, so far, have had the best growing season for several years.

May was unfavorably dry in the Ohio Valley States, Missouri, and the western Plains from Nebraska to Oklahoma, including some eastern portions of the Rocky Mountain States. A belt extending from the eastern Ohio Valley across the central Mississippi and lower Missouri Valleys, and Kansas, had only fifty per cent, or even less, of the normal rainfall, and for the combined three spring months, some parts of this area have received only about half their usual moisture supply. At the same time, more rain the latter part of May would have been helpful in the Atlantic area. However, about two-thirds of Kentucky, much of Indiana and Illinois, and practically all of Missouri, Oklahoma, and western Kansas, had generous rains during the last few days which very largely relieved the droughty conditions. In fact, the entire area from the western Ohio Valley and western Lake region Westward to the Rocky Mountains, is now rather generally supplied with sufficient moisture for present needs, while the reaction to warmer weather since the close of May has promoted good crop growth in these important agricultural States. Rain is still needed in Tennessee, about one-third of Kentucky, parts of Indiana, nearly all of Ohio, and West Virginia, and in the Atlantic States from northern North Carolina Northward.

The weather during May was mostly favorable for agricultural operations, except for some more or less local interruption by wet fields to planting and cultivating row crops. Small grain seeding was accomplished in good season, and the planting of corn and cotton, while somewhat late in places, was largely finished without serious delay. Both corn and cotton have come up to reasonably good stands, as a rule, with many important producing sections requiring less replanting than usual. The cultivation of row crops is advancing favorably, with only comparatively local complaints of weedy fields, principally in parts of Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan. Winter wheat is ripening fast as far north as the Ohio River and southeastern Kansas, with harvest progressing in the South, and some local cutting of a few early fields as far north as southern Kansas. As a whole, the month was unfavorable for winter wheat because of dryness, especially in the western portion of the main belt. Oats show rather general improvement since the recent rains in the northern half of the country, and spring wheat in the Northwest is unusually promising. Ranges in the great western grazing country, especially the Northwest, are in good shape rather generally, with steady improvement in livestock, though recent cool weather and rains have been unfavorable for shearing in more western districts. Tree fruits are promising in the Lake region and Northeast, but in the Virginia area the apple set has been much lighter than was indicated by previous blooms. In conclusion, it may be said that, with the exception of the need for rain in the central and northern States of the East, which, however, is not as yet generally serious, recent weather has been rather satisfactory for Agricultural operations and crop growth over much the greater portion of the country.